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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): SOLA INTERNATIONAL HOLDINGS LTD. [AU/AU]; Sherriffs Road, Lonsdale, S.A. 5160 (AU).

(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): MILLER, Anthony, Dennis [AU/AU]; 29 Ridgehaven Drive, Bellevue Heights, S.A. 5050 (AU). VARNAS, Saulius, Raymond [AU/AU]; 22 McCoy Street, Brighton, S.A. 5048 (AU).

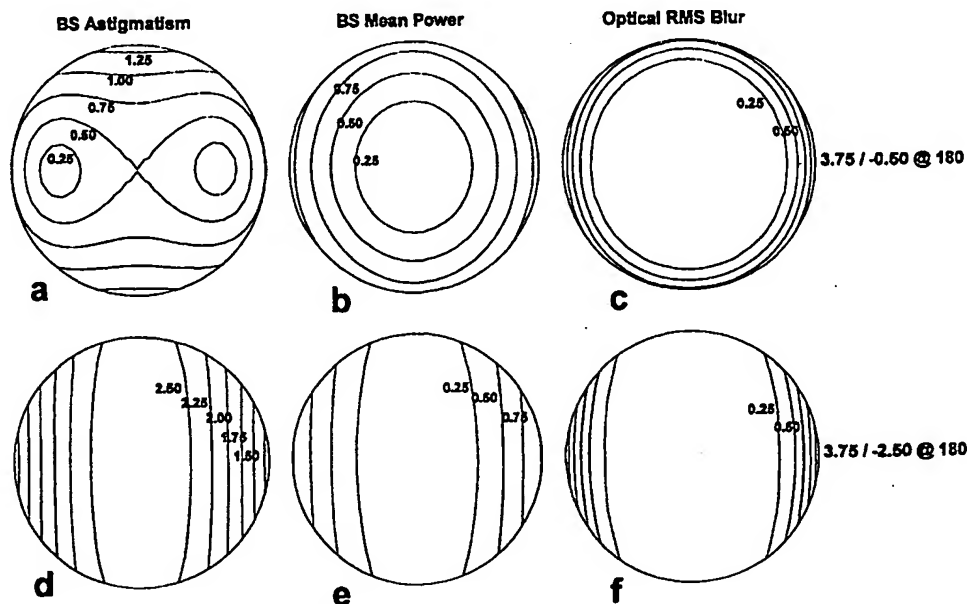
(74) Agent: EVANS, Ray; Phillips Ormonde & Fitzpatrick, 367 Collins Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000 (AU).

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(54) Title: IMPROVED OPHTHALMIC LENS



(57) Abstract

An ophthalmic lens element having a first surface and an atoroidal or generally aspheric second surface. The second surface is described by a symmetric polynomial whose coefficients have been chosen to minimise a merit function constructed of the sum of a particular optical aberration over substantially the entire surface thereof.

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IMPROVED OPHTHALMIC LENS

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to an improved single vision ophthalmic lens. The invention particularly relates to methods of surface correction to improve the optical performance of a single vision ophthalmic lens by reducing optical aberrations, such as those associated with power and astigmatic errors, together with lenses produced by such methods.

Background of the Invention

Conventional single vision lenses do not adequately correct for optical aberrations apparent to the wearer when viewing objects, through the lens, at oblique angles. This results from the lens surfaces not being the ideal shape to fully correct for the wearer's specific needs of power, cylinder correction and fitting requirements for off-axis vision.

Attempts have been made to correct such errors in the prior art with limited success, and have most often resulted in compromises that either do not fully correct the entire lens surface or that inadequately address the optical aberrations and errors.

Typically, prior art attempts introduced corrections by aspherising one or both of the lens surfaces for spherical or toric corrections. For example, typical prior art methods have relied on aspherising the two principle toric meridians of the lens back surface, improving the optical performance of these meridians independent of each other. This method has proven to be deficient in that the regions between the two principle meridians are not sufficiently optically optimised in the same way as the vision along the principle meridians.

Other methods have typically included minimising astigmatism on a grid of points on the lens surface using optical ray tracing techniques, following which a twice continuously differentiable spline surface (satisfying the data at each point) is fitted. However, it is only possible to satisfy these conditions for a limited range of simple surfaces that cover only a fraction of all surfaces that are of interest to the ophthalmic industry. In other cases, such an approach normally requires the fitting of a smoothing spline surface in an attempt to approximate the calculated data at each point, without satisfying it exactly. As a result, the optics of such a surface often significantly deviates from the optimal case.

- 10 It is an object of the present invention to provide an improved single vision ophthalmic lens that overcomes the difficulties identified above with prior art single vision ophthalmic lenses.

Summary of the Invention

- 15 The present invention provides an ophthalmic lens element having a first surface and an atoroidal or generally aspheric second surface. The second surface is described by a symmetric polynomial whose coefficients have been chosen to minimise a merit function constructed of the sum of a particular optical aberration over substantially the entire surface thereof.

- 20 The present invention also provides a method of designing an ophthalmic lens element having a first surface and an atoroidal or generally aspheric second surface. The method includes selecting a symmetric polynomial for the second surface, selecting a merit function relating to at least one optical aberration, minimising the merit function over the substantially entire surface thereof to generate a modified surface function, and shaping the second surface to the modified surface function.
- 25

It has been found that in order to reduce optical aberrations visible to wearers, it is necessary to apply the appropriate corrections over substantially the entire ophthalmic lens element, rather than just the two principle cylinder meridians. This has the beneficial effect of making a larger area of the lens surface to have tolerable levels of optical aberrations.

General Description of the Invention

Before turning to a general description of various aspects of the present invention, it will be instructive to provide some definitions for various terms used above. In this respect, by the term 'lens element' we mean all forms of individual refractive optical bodies employed in the ophthalmic arts, including, but not limited to, lenses, lens wafers and semi-finished lens blanks requiring further finishing to a particular patient's prescription. Also included are formers used in the manufacture of single vision glass lenses and moulds for the casting of single vision lenses in polymeric material.

Further, by the terms 'atoroidal surface' or 'atoric surface' we mean a surface being of a generally toric nature at the intersection of the surface and the optical axis of the lens element, but which departs from a circular section along any radial line from the surface centre. In this respect, it will be appreciated that this surface is described in the present invention by a symmetric polynomial. Also, by the term 'effective surface' we mean at least that area of the surface of a lens remaining after the edging and finishing of the lens.

In the following description, further terms will be used that may also require definition. In particular, by the term 'astigmatic correction' we mean the wearer's prescribed cylinder correction and the associated axis of this correction. Also, by the terms 'astigmatism' or 'surface astigmatism' we mean a measure of the degree to which the curvature of the lens varies among intersecting planes which are normal to the surface of the lens at a point on the surface.

Finally, by the term 'generally aspheric surface' we mean a surface bearing no particular cylinder and whose surface departs from a circular section along any radial line from the surface centre. It will be appreciated that in the present invention, such a surface is described by a symmetric polynomial such that $C_{2,0}$ and $C_{0,2}$ are substantially equal. In this respect, $C_{2,0}$ and $C_{0,2}$ may differ to correct for optical performance, but are substantially different to the wearer's prescription cylinder needs.

Turning now to a general description of the invention, in one preferred form a particular combination of optical aberrations may be minimised over substantially the entire aperture of the ophthalmic lens element. Alternatively, a particular measure of optical aberrations may be controlled, so that it increases gradually from the optical centre to the periphery of the ophthalmic lens element but stays below a certain threshold known to be just detectable by most wearers. The purpose of such an alternative is to allow for the provision of a lens element with a cosmetic improvement, such as a thinner and lighter lens, without any noticeable degradation in optical performance.

The first surface of the ophthalmic lens element of the present invention may be a spherical surface, a toric surface, or a rotationally symmetric aspheric surface, chosen to produce the best optical and/or cosmetic performance for the wearer's overall prescription.

It should be noted that the first surface referred to above may be either the front surface or the back surface of the lens element, which implies that the second surface will conversely be either of the back surface or the front surface respectively of the lens element.

Thus, the first surface may be the front surface, which then becomes fixed while the modifications are worked to the back surface. The front surface may then be any of a spherical surface, a toric surface, or a rotationally symmetric aspheric

surface, as mentioned above. In this form, it is then the back surface that has an atoroidal or generally aspheric shape and is described by the symmetric polynomial whose coefficients have been chosen to minimise a merit function constructed of the sum of a particular optical aberration over substantially the entire surface thereof.

Alternatively, the first surface may be the back surface, which then becomes fixed while the modifications are worked to the front surface. The back surface may then be any of a spherical surface, a toric surface, or a rotationally symmetric aspheric surface, as described above. In this form, it will be the front surface that has an atoroidal or generally aspheric shape and is described by the symmetric polynomial whose coefficients have been chosen to minimise a merit function constructed of the sum of a particular optical aberration over substantially the entire surface thereof.

In a preferred form, the present invention thus provides an ophthalmic lens element including a front, generally spherical surface (or a front, toric surface) providing the overall base curve (or for the toric surface, providing a cylinder correction) required to correct for the wearer's mean power error in combination with the mean curvature of the back surface. The back surface may then have an atoroidal or generally aspheric shape and be described by the symmetric polynomial whose coefficients have been chosen to minimise a merit function constructed of the sum of a particular optical aberration over substantially the entire surface thereof.

In this form, the front surface may additionally be flattened to provide a cosmetic benefit, and the mean power of the back surface may be adjusted to provide the required lens power. Alternatively, the front surface in this form may be selected to be an aspheric surface to improve the optical performance which may be degraded during the flattening of the lens form, as it would depart from best form for the given prescription correction.

In another form, the present invention also provides an improved ophthalmic lens that includes a first surface wafer having a first lens surface, and a second surface wafer having a second lens surface. As above, the second surface may then have an atoroidal or generally aspheric shape and be described by a symmetric polynomial whose coefficients have been chosen to minimise a merit function constructed of the sum of a particular optical aberration over substantially the entire surface thereof.

In an alternative of this form of the invention, there may further be provided an ophthalmic lens element in the form of a second surface wafer for use with a first surface wafer, the second surface wafer having a front surface and a back surface. The front surface of the second surface wafer may be described by a symmetric polynomial whose coefficients have been chosen to minimise a merit function constructed of the sum of a particular optical aberration over substantially the entire surface thereof. The back surface of the second surface wafer may then be suitable for combination with the first surface wafer.

In relation to the modification to be made to the second surface of the ophthalmic lens element of the present invention (in terms of it being described by a symmetric polynomial whose coefficients have been chosen to minimise a merit function constructed of the sum of a particular optical aberration over substantially the entire surface thereof), in a preferred form, the present invention provides a method of designing an ophthalmic lens element. The preferred method includes the steps of:

selecting a base surface function for the second lens surface in the form of an n^{th} order symmetric polynomial of the form

$$z = \sum_{k=0,2,\dots}^n \sum_{j=0,2,\dots}^k C_{k-j,j} x^{k-j} y^j;$$

selecting a merit function relating to at least one optical aberration characteristic of the lens that needs to be minimised;

computing the coefficients of the symmetric polynomial surface $C_{k,j}$ that

minimise the merit function over the substantially entire surface of the ophthalmic lens element to generate a modified surface function; and

fabricating an ophthalmic lens element having a second lens surface shaped according to the modified surface function.

- 5 Alternatively, the method may be altered such that the selection of a merit function is the selection of a merit function modified to relate at least one optical aberration characteristic together with at least one lens cosmetic characteristic to a merit figure. Such a modified merit function may operate, for example, to modify the lens thickness, for example towards the periphery of the lens.
- 10 In considering the types of merit functions that may be used in this method, it should firstly be noted that there are a number of measures of the lens optical aberrations as seen by the wearer, such as:

$$\text{mean power error (mpe)} = \frac{\varepsilon_{11} + \varepsilon_{22}}{2}$$

$$\text{astigmatic error (cyl)} = \left((\varepsilon_{11} - \varepsilon_{22})^2 + 4\varepsilon_{12}^2 \right)^{1/2}$$

$$\begin{aligned} 15 \quad \text{rms blur} &= \left(\frac{\varepsilon_{11}^2 + 2\varepsilon_{12}^2 + \varepsilon_{22}^2}{2} \right)^{1/2} \\ &= \left((\text{mpe})^2 + \frac{1}{4}(\text{cyl error})^2 \right)^{1/2} \end{aligned}$$

where ε is the focal error matrix that may be written as:

$$\varepsilon = \begin{pmatrix} \varepsilon_{11} & \varepsilon_{12} \\ \varepsilon_{21} & \varepsilon_{22} \end{pmatrix}$$

where $\varepsilon_{12} = \varepsilon_{21}$ by the choice of the orthonormal basis set.

20

Referring to these lens optical aberrations, four possible merit functions that may be utilised in the above method, depending upon the specific application of the optimised lens, are as follows:

$$M_1 = \sum_{\theta} (\text{rms blur})_{\theta}^2$$

$$M_2 = \sum_{\theta} \left((mpe)^2 + (cyl\ error)^2 \right)_{\theta}$$

$$M_3 = \sum_{\theta} \left(\frac{1}{16} (mpe)^2 + (cyl\ error)^2 \right)_{\theta}$$

$$M_4 = \sum_{\theta} \left((mpe)^2 + \frac{1}{16} (cylerror)^2 \right)_{\theta}$$

where summations are over a number of sample eye rotations θ . These
 5 sample eye rotations are selected along a set of meridians covering substantially the entire surface of the lens element.

In relation to these merit functions, M_1 represents a simple merit function based solely on rms blur, and is a preferred merit function for use in the present
 10 invention. M_2 represents a merit function which provides a balanced weighting between the impact of mean power error and cyl error. The modes M_3 and M_4 represent "minimum astigmatic error" and "minimum mean power error" strategies respectively.

15 In a still further embodiment, a term may be included in the merit function that represents the cosmetics of the lens. For example, instead of using any merit function, M , alone, a modified merit function may be defined by:

$$M^* = M + \eta_{\theta} \lambda^2 \left(\frac{V}{\pi r^2} \right)^2$$

where η_{θ} denotes the number of sample eye rotations θ considered in M , r is a
 20 specified lens radius, and V is the lens volume out to the radius r . The factor λ is seen to be a weighting on the average lens thickness.

The ophthalmic lens element of the present invention may be formed from glass or from a polymeric article. The polymeric article, where applicable, may be of
 25 any suitable type. A polycarbonate, for example a material of the diallyl glycol carbonate type, may be used. The polymeric article may be formed from cross-linkable polymeric casting compositions, such as described in the applicant's United States patent 4,912,155, United States patent Application 07/781,392,

Australian Patent applications 50581/93 and 50582/93, or its European patent 453159A2. Such cross-linkable polymeric casting compositions may include a diacrylate or dimethacrylate monomer (such as polyoxyalkylene glycol diacrylate or dimethacrylate or a bisphenol fluorene diacrylate or dimethacrylate) and a
 5 polymerisable comonomer, for example methacrylates, acrylates, vinyls, vinyl ethers, allyls, aromatic olefins, ethers, polythiols and the like.

Description of Examples of Invention

The present invention will now be described with reference to a series of examples and accompanying illustrations. However, it is to be appreciated that
 10 the following description is not to limit the generality of the above description.

Figure 1 illustrates two lenses of the present invention having positive sphere powers of 3.75 D. The front surface of these lenses is a sphere of 4.63 D. The back surface is atoric optimised for the cylinder values of -0.50 D in Figure 1(a), (b), (c) and -2.50 D in Figure 1(d), (e), (f). The coefficients of the 4th order
 15 symmetric polynomial describing the form of the respective atoric surfaces are given in Tables 1 and 2. Figures 1(a) and (c) show the back surface astigmatism contour plot, Figures 1(b) and (d) display the mean back surface power, while Figures 1(c) and (f) show the ray traced optical RMS blur created by each of these lenses respectively. Contours are incremented by 0.25 D and
 20 the diameter of the circle is 60 mm in all the Figures.

Table 1: Coefficients of the symmetric polynomial

Optimised for 3.75/-0.50		
X^2	Y^2	
1.23E-03	1.66E-03	
X^4	X^2Y^2	Y^4
2.79E-07	4.45E-07	2.16E-07

Table 2: Coefficients of the symmetric polynomial

Optimised for 3.75/-2.50		
X^2	Y^2	
1.23E-03	3.36E-03	
X^4	X^2Y^2	Y^4
2.96E-07	2.22E-07	5.13E-08

Figure 2 illustrates two lenses of the present invention having negative sphere powers of -5.75 D. The front surface of these lenses is a sphere of 1.32 D. The back surface is atoric optimised for the cylinder values of -0.50 D in Figure 1(a), (b), (c) and -2.50 D in Figure 1(d), (e), (f). The coefficients of the 4th order symmetric polynomial describing the form of the respective atoric surfaces are given in Tables 3 and 4. Figures 1(a) and (c) show the back surface astigmatism contour plot, Figures 1(b) and (d) display the mean back surface power, while Figures 1(c) and (f) show the ray traced optical RMS blur created by each of these lenses respectively. Contours are incremented by 0.25 D in all figures.

Table 3: Coefficients of the symmetric polynomial

Optimised for -5.75/-0.50		
X^2	Y^2	
6.15E-03	6.58E-03	
X^4	X^2Y^2	Y^4
-6.81E-08	4.93E-08	-7.62E-09

Table 4: Coefficients of the symmetric polynomial

Optimised for -5.75/-2.50		
X^2	Y^2	
6.15E-03	8.29E-03	
X^4	X^2Y^2	Y^4
-5.24E-08	3.57E-07	4.12E-07

Figure 3 shows the optical RMS blur contours for the conventional toric lenses of the same prescriptions as those in Figures 1 and 2.

Finally, it will be appreciated that there may be other variations and modifications made to the features described above, which may also be within the scope of
5 the present invention.

CLAIMS:

1. An ophthalmic lens element having a first surface and an atoroidal or generally aspheric second surface, the second surface being described by a symmetric polynomial whose coefficients have been chosen to minimise a merit
5 function constructed of the sum of a particular optical aberration over substantially the entire surface thereof.
2. An ophthalmic lens element according to claim 1 wherein a combination of optical aberrations are minimised over substantially the entire aperture of the ophthalmic lens element.
- 10 3. An ophthalmic lens element according to claim 1, wherein a measure of optical aberrations are controlled, so that the optical aberrations increase gradually from the optical centre to the periphery of the ophthalmic lens element, but stay below a certain threshold known to be just detectable by most wearers, allowing for the provision of a lens element with a cosmetic improvement, without
15 any noticeable degradation in optical performance
4. An ophthalmic lens element according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the first is a spherical surface, a toric surface, or a rotationally symmetric aspheric surface, chosen to produce the best optical and/or cosmetic performance for the wearer's overall prescription.
- 20 5. An ophthalmic lens element according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the first surface is the front surface, the front surface being any of a spherical surface, a toric surface, or a rotationally symmetric aspheric surface, the back surface having an atoroidal or generally aspheric shape and being described by the symmetric polynomial whose coefficients have been chosen to
25 minimise a merit function constructed of the sum of a particular optical aberration over substantially the entire surface thereof.

6. An ophthalmic lens element according to claim 5, including a front, generally spherical surface providing overall base curve required to correct for a wearer's mean power correction in combination with the mean curvature of the back surface.
- 5 7. An ophthalmic lens element according to claim 5, including a front, toric surface providing a cylinder correction whose powers are chosen to provide the lens power necessary in combination with the front surface.
8. An ophthalmic lens element according to claim 5 or claim 6, wherein the front surface is flattened to provide a cosmetic benefit, and the mean power of
10 the back surface is adjusted to provide the required lens power.
9. An ophthalmic lens element according to claim 5, wherein the front surface is selected to be an aspheric surface to improve the optical performance degraded during flattening of the lens form to provide a cosmetic benefit.
10. An ophthalmic lens element including a first surface wafer having a first
15 lens surface, and a second surface wafer having a second lens surface, the second surface having an atoroidal or generally aspheric shape and being described by a symmetric polynomial whose coefficients have been chosen to minimise a merit function constructed of the sum of a particular optical aberration over substantially the entire surface thereof.
- 20
11. An ophthalmic lens element including a second surface wafer for use with a first surface wafer, the second surface wafer having a front surface and a back surface, the front surface of the second surface wafer having an atoroidal or generally aspheric shape and being described by a symmetric polynomial whose
25 coefficients have been chosen to minimise a merit function constructed of the sum of a particular optical aberration over substantially the entire surface thereof, the back surface of the second surface wafer being suitable for combination with the first surface wafer.

12. A method of designing an ophthalmic lens element having a first surface and an atoroidal or generally aspheric second surface, the method including selecting a symmetric polynomial for the second surface, selecting a merit function relating to at least one optical aberration, minimising the merit function
5 over the substantially entire surface thereof to generate a modified surface function, and shaping the second surface to the modified surface function.

13. A method of designing an ophthalmic lens element having a first surface and an atoroidal or generally aspheric second surface, the method including the steps of:

10 selecting a base surface function for the second lens surface in the form of an n^{th} order symmetric polynomial of the form

$$z = \sum_{k=0,2,\dots}^n \sum_{j=0,2,\dots}^k C_{k-j,j} x^{k-j} y^j;$$

selecting a merit function relating to at least one optical aberration characteristic of the lens that needs to be minimised;

15 computing the coefficients of the symmetric polynomial surface $C_{k-j,j}$ that minimise the merit function over the substantially entire surface of the ophthalmic lens element to generate a modified surface function; and

fabricating an ophthalmic lens element having a second lens surface shaped according to the modified surface function.

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14. A method according to claim 13 wherein the merit function is selected from the group of merit functions comprising:

$$M_1 = \sum_{\theta} (rms \ blur)_{\theta}^2$$

$$M_2 = \sum_{\theta} \left((mpe)^2 + (cyl \ error)^2 \right)_{\theta}$$

25
$$M_3 = \sum_{\theta} \left(\frac{1}{16} (mpe)^2 + (cyl \ error)^2 \right)_{\theta}$$

$$M_4 = \sum_{\theta} \left((mpe)^2 + \frac{1}{16} (cylerror)^2 \right)_{\theta}$$

where summations are over a number of sample eye rotations θ .

15. A method according to claim 13 or claim 14, wherein the selection of a merit function is the selection of a merit function modified to relate at least one optical aberration characteristic together with at least one lens cosmetic characteristic to a merit figure.

16. A method according to claim 14 wherein the modified merit function operates to modify the lens thickness towards the periphery of the lens.

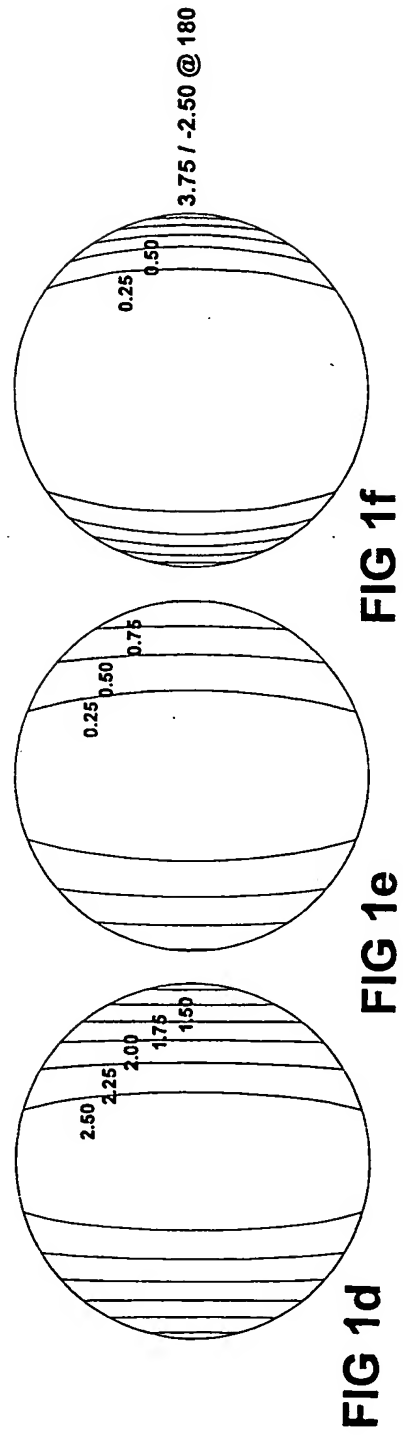
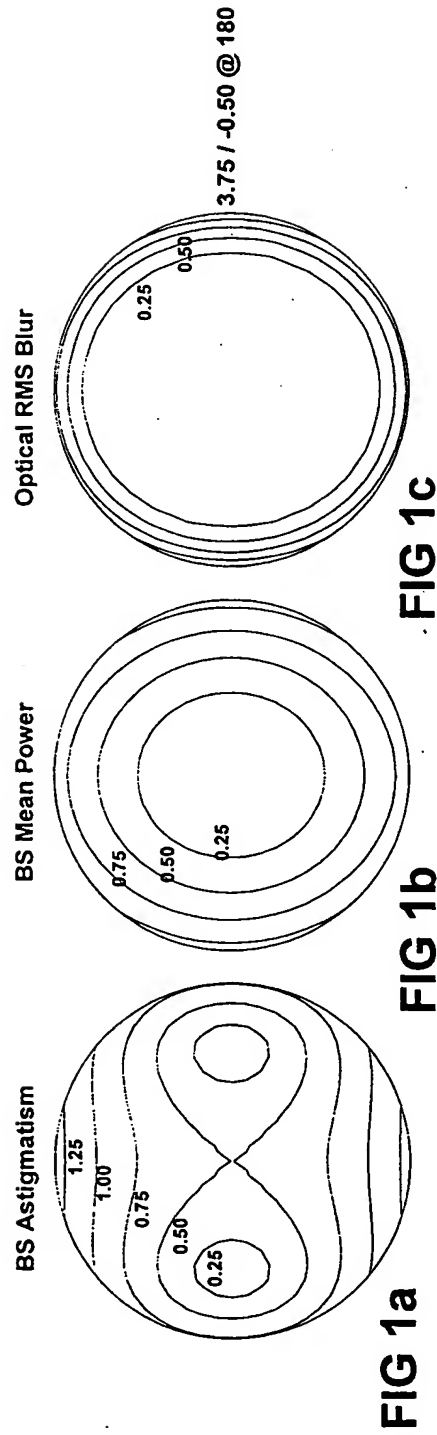
17. A method according to claim 14 or claim 15 wherein a term is included in the merit function that represents the cosmetics of the lens, a modified merit function being defined by:

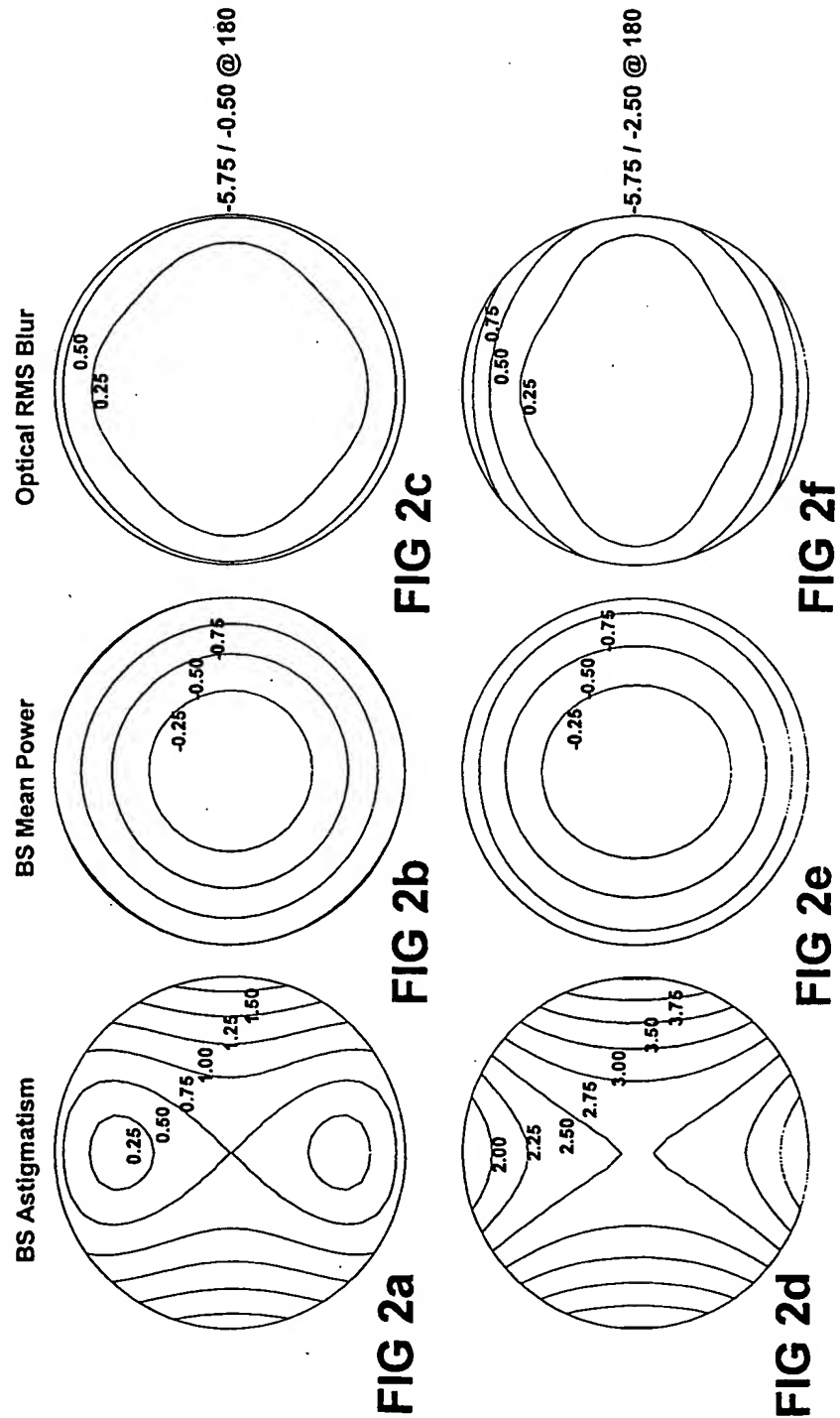
$$M^* = M + \eta_{\theta} \lambda^2 \left(\frac{V}{\pi r^2} \right)^2$$

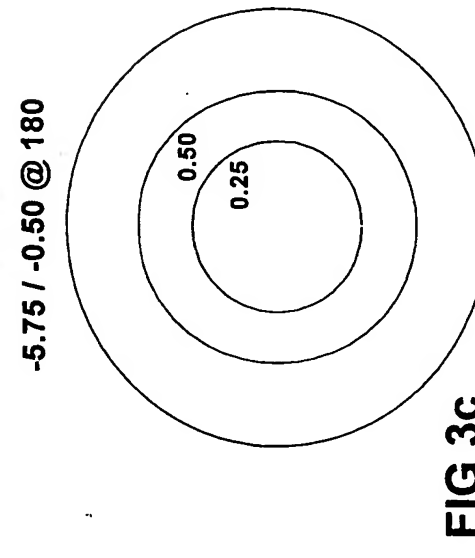
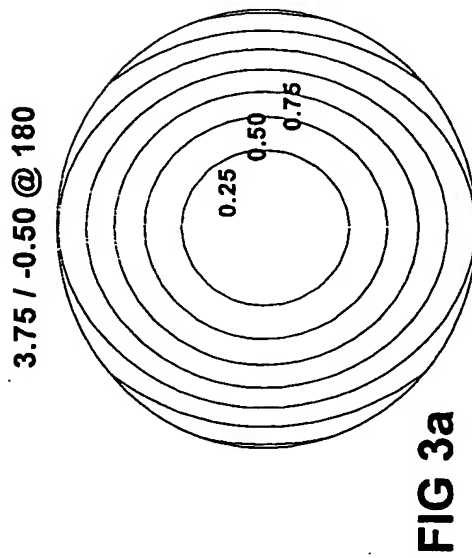
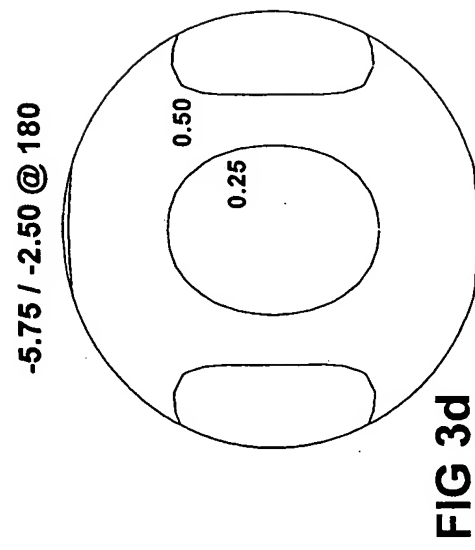
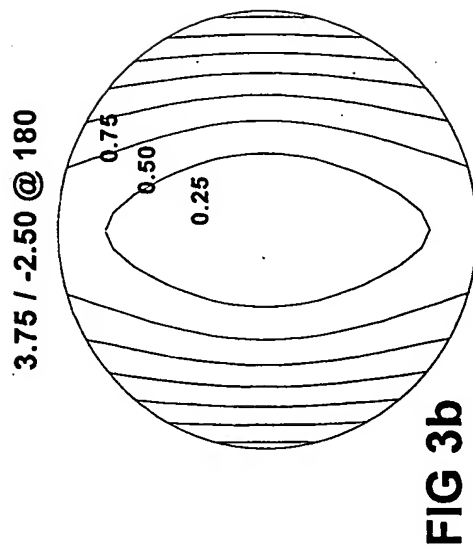
where M represents any merit function, η_{θ} denotes the number of sample eye rotations θ considered in M, r is a specified lens radius, V is the lens volume out to the radius r, and the factor λ is a weighting on the average lens thickness.

18. An ophthalmic lens element produced in accordance with the method of claim 12.

19. An ophthalmic lens element produced in accordance with the method of any one of claims 13 to 16.







INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/AU 98/00881

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER					
Int Cl ⁶ : G02C 7/04, 7/06					
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC					
B. FIELDS SEARCHED					
Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC G02C 7/04, 7/06					
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched AU: IPC as above					
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) WPAT lens; polynomial; quadratic; equation; formula; symmetr.; JPIO					
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT					
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.			
A	WO, 94/25887 A (BOSTON EYE TECHNOLOGY) 14 November 1994 See abstract				
P,A	US 5715032 A (ISENBERG) 3 February 1998 See column 2 lines 46-61				
A	US 5220359 A (ROFFMAN) 15 June 1993 Column 4 lines 54-65				
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex </div>					
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>* Special categories of cited documents:</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> </tr> </table>			<p>* Special categories of cited documents:</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p>	<p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p>	
<p>* Special categories of cited documents:</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p>	<p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p>				
Date of the actual completion of the international search 14 December 1998	Date of mailing of the international search report 22 DEC 1998				
Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200 WODEN ACT 2606 AUSTRALIA Facsimile No.: (02) 6285 3929	Authorized officer F.C. PEARSON Telephone No.: (02) 6283 2195				

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/AU 98/00881

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 4195919 A (SHELTON) 1 April 1980 Column 1 line 60 - column 2 line 7	
A	DE 3729845 A (ZEISS) 23 March 1989 See claim 1	
A	DE 3622757 A (SEIKO EPSON CORP) 21 January 1987 See whole document	

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT
Information on patent family members

International application No.
PCT/AU 98/00881

This Annex lists the known "A" publication level patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The Australian Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent Document Cited in Search Report				Patent Family Member			
WO	9425887	AU	67678/94	CA	2161890	EP	724742
		US	5452031				
US	5220359	AU	81172/91	BR	9102977	CA	2047507
		CN	1058474	CZ	9102295	EP	472291
		FI	913537	GR	91100284	HK	201/96
		HU	60550	JP	6201990	MX	9100362
		NO	912880	NZ	238960	PT	98420
		SK	2295/91	US	5050981	ZA	9105779
DE	3729845	EP	310817	JP	1072116		
DE	3622757	FR	2584823	JP	62010617	US	4762408
END OF ANNEX							